

40 days to better understanding

The folks at Seeds of Hope believe that authentic work towards healing hunger comes from an inner strength, and that inner strength comes from spiritual disciplines. We also firmly believe that a concerted effort, even by a small number of people, to observe a time of prayer together and perhaps fasting (Yeah, we know it's scary) can make a huge difference in how we all face the problems of hunger and poverty. This forty-day calendar, compiled by Elizabeth Walker and Katie Cook, is designed to help you prepare spiritually for the work ahead of us. We challenge you to use the scriptures and suggestions on these two pages to make these forty days a holy season. —from the staff and Council of Stewards

1



Isaiah 1:15-17

Pray for those who are hungry and homeless. Ask God to open your eyes to the needy around you and look for ways to serve them. Find a prayer partner to keep you accountable.

2

Visit a patient at the hospital who is chronically ill. Introduce yourself, then simply hold his hand.

Matthew 25: 36, 43

7

Luke 9:10-17

Plug into the US Committee for World Food Day's information network: 202/653-2404; worldfooddayusa.org or feedingminds.org

8

Leviticus 23: 22

Read the book *Stories from Below the Poverty Line* and learn from real accounts of people who experience urban poverty.

9

Ezekiel 16:49

Ponder this fact: the average age of a homeless person in the U.S. is seven years.

16

Matthew 6: 25-34

Go through your closet today. What you haven't worn in a year, give away. Don't replace those clothes with new ones; learn to live with less.

14

Raise money to buy a sheep for someone on the other side of the world—the wool will clothe them and the meat will feed them. Contact Heifer Project International at PO Box 808; Little Rock, AR 72203; 501/376-6836; www.heifer.org.

Luke 1:46-55

15

Psalms 41: 3

Visit a homebound neighbor. Help her with some basic chores.

22

Find a local food pantry and volunteer to distribute groceries.



Proverbs 14:21

23

Fast for one meal today and give to a hunger relief organization



the equivalent of what you would have eaten.

James 5:1-6

21

Isaiah 3:13-15

Estimate how many pounds of meat your family ate during the last week and give 25 cents per pound.

29

When your stomach growls, pray for the hungry. 1 Cor. 4:9-13

36

Job 5:1-16



Go to dinner at a favorite restaurant. Match the cost and donate it to a food relief agency.

30

Jeremiah 22:13-16

Investigate US sanctions against Cuba and how they affect a nation of impoverished. Then write your Congressional representative.

37

Psalms 82:1-4

Do this with your Sunday school class: take a \$25 budget, go to the grocery store, and figure out how to feed a family of four for the week. (No fair using what's already in your pantry.)

35

Practice believing six impossible things before breakfast. Luke 14:12-14

3 Order Church World Service's Tools of Hope resource kit and try the hunger simulation board game on pages 9-11. Church World Service is a ministry of the National Council of Churches in the USA.
PO Box 968
Elkhart, IN 46515
800/297-1516
www.churchworldservice.org

Deut. 14:28 -15:11

10 Read today's scripture and think about this: If you had just met Jesus like Zacchaeus did, what changes would you make in your life?

Luke 19:9-10

17 Buy a package of granola bars and keep them in your car to give out to people who ask you for money or to anyone that you feel led to minister to.



I Cor. 10:23-24

24 Encourage US legislators to help provide food, vaccinations, education and jobs for people in Africa. Contact Bread for the World at www.bread.org.

1 Timothy 6:17-19

31 During a lunch break, deliver food to the homebound through the Meals-on-Wheels program.

2 Kings 4:42-45



Pray for all of the people who work for the end of hunger in our world.

Matthew 19:16-22

4 Start walking or biking more instead of driving.

Ezekiel 18:5-9

11 Estimate the cost of each meal you eat today (even home cooked meals). Give that amount of money to a local shelter.

Proverbs 14:31

18 Look a homeless person in the eye.



Isaiah 60: 4-5

25 Meditate on this today: If Jesus went shopping with you, would your buying habits be different?

Isaiah 58:6-12

32 Consider taking your youth group to a "Day on the Other Side" retreat, where they will experience the realities of poverty in a country like Nicaragua. For information, contact the World Hunger Relief Training Farm, PO Box 639, Elm Mott, TX 76640; 254/799-5611; WHRI@hot.rr.com; worldhungerrelief.org.

Proverbs 16: 26

39 Count the times you open your refrigerator door. Donate 10 cents for each time.

Matthew 25:34-40

5 Don't eat any snacks today. At least you know that you have another meal coming.

Lamentations 1:11

12 Shower in less than three minutes. Pray for those who don't have the luxury of a bath or the dignity that comes with cleanliness.

Luke 16:19-31

19 Find the movie *Hidden in America* (with Beau Bridges and Bruce Davison) and watch it with your study group.

Proverbs 19: 17

26 Have one meal today where you eat only brown rice and drink only water. That's what many hungry people get to eat, and at least your water is clean.

Mark 10: 23-27

33 Don't recycle aluminum cans. Instead, bag them and leave them by a dumpster for homeless collectors.

Luke 10:29-37

6 Help serve breakfast to the guests at a homeless shelter.



Proverbs 11:2

13 Today, give up sugar, salt, pepper and any other kind of spice or additive.

Galatians 6: 7-10

21 Pay to eat dinner at the local food shelter. Would you eat again the same meal at the same place, even if it was free?

Romans 12:9-21

27 Think of ways in which you can better conserve energy. Give 25 cents to a hunger organization for every electrical appliance in your kitchen.

Amos 8:4-7

34 Plant a garden in your back yard and give the produce to your local food pantry.



Luke 8: 4-8

40 Meditate today on this quote:
"And what ought to be my place (the place of the privileged) in a world filled with the oppressed? This, I suppose, is the perennial question, perhaps, which forms the very heart of the Sermon on the Mount... The question has been raised by the bodies and souls of those who suffer. Has the answer been posed by those who serve?"
Marc Ellis, *The Year at the Catholic Worker*

Lamentations 3:40